The
791 pi-mu, a Lolo magician, is invited to perform on this occasion. In every Lolo village there are always one or two families that specialize in magic, a profession hereditary from father to son for many generations. The pi-mu are outstanding personalities among the Lolo. In their houses are kept a number of Lolo scriptures for use in festivals, sickness, fortune-telling, the wedding ceremony, and all kinds of magic performances. The
[212] scriptures are in the Lolo written language which survives to this day mainly because of its transmission by the pi-mu from master to pupil. The common people have no occasion to use the written language, which actually does not occupy as important a position in Lolo society as is generally believed.

When there is sickness in the family, the Lolo do not
●756 depend upon medicine for a cure, but ask the pi-mu to perform magic to drive off the evil spirits. They believe that
[753] sickness is caused by ghosts and goblins, and can be cured through exorcism. During the ceremony, as mentioned earl-
[782] ier, they sacrifice victims, such as an ox, sheep, pig, or chicken, according to the nature of the sickness and the economic condition of the family. To kill cattle or chickens for
[574] such an occasion provides the family with an opportunity for a big feast, which helps to vary the monotony of life and a regular vegetable diet.

[46] Praying for rain is an event of great importance.
782 Rain is scarce on the mountains where the Lolo live and cultivate their dry land. During a year of drought, they pray to
791 the mountain spirit for rain. The Lolo do not have a monothe-
[771] istic concept and believe in an unseen world where a ghost or goblin exists in every object. So they invite the pi-mu to perform magic to control the environment around them. When the Han-Chinese pray for rain, they direct their prayers to the dragon-king in the waters; the Lolo, on the other hand, notice
[821] that rain comes from the mountain top and so they pray to the mountain spirit. This illustrates how religious ideas are influenced by environment. In praying for rain, they also seek the help of the pi-mu. After having killed a white sheep or a white chicken, they would go up the mountain and from the precipices scatter the blood-splattered white feathers to look like snow while the pi-mu chants the scripture and performs magic to beg for sweet rain. The rainmaking ceremony is very important because it is directly related to their economic life. Insufficient rain will affect the harvest of corn, buckwheat, oats, and other grains and result in a food shortage for the family.

778 is limited to the mysterious quality or the supernatural power of the object without involving any concept of ghosts and spirits.

[94] The belief in the souls, spirits, and ghosts is even 775 more popular and universal in Lolo society. All kinds of sick- 753 ness, death, and misfortune are due to the evil influence of the ghosts. Their names are many: ghosts of persons hanged, ghosts of dysentery, ghosts of persons murdered, su-nieh ghosts, ghosts of strangers, monkey ghosts, headache ghosts, and countless others. All ghosts and evil spirits can cause evil and bring disturbance and harm to human beings. So the Lolo are particularly afraid of the ghosts and have numerous rituals to control them. The spirits are not consistent in their good or bad behavior. Good spirits protect and aid the living, whereas bad spirits could change into ghosts to plague them. 776 After death, family ancestors change into spirits following a soul-delivery ceremony. The original ancestor of the pi-mu is also a spirit who can be invoked to descend to earth. The [782] Lolo do not make offerings to images or worship them. They have no concept of monotheism. All natural phenomena, such as sky, earth, sun, and moon, have spirits, but since these have little bearing on daily life, no ritual for their worship has evolved. The mountain spirit, called mi-hsi in the Lolo language, is comparatively the most important because it controls rain and is always invoked during rain-praying. Different mountains have different spirits who are not interrelated. The [821] Lolo belief in the mountain spirit as an agent of rain control is diametrically opposed to the Chinese belief in the dragon king as the controller of rain. This merely indicates that religious ideas are influenced by the natural environment. The Lolo who live on high mountain tops have observed that the clouds, fog, and rain all descend from the peaks.

Animatism and animism co-exist in Lolo society and 771 together constitute their religious thought. However, they differ in practical operation. On the one hand, magic power relies upon technical devices for its practice, and on the other the individual communicates with the supernatural world through a spiritualistic medium. The Lolo pi-mu is concurrent- 791 ly a chief priest and a magician. When he recites the scrip- 793 ture to communicate with spirits and when he officiates at 756 sacrificial ceremonies, he assumes the position of a priest and spiritual medium; when he imprecates to subdue ghosts and when he performs ceremonies to cure sickness, he becomes a magician. Actually, the main duty of a Lolo pi-mu is none other than the practice of magic.

The pi-mu is a unique figure in Lolo society and quite different from ordinary people in his responsibility. He specializes in religious and magic activities. There is at least one pi-mu in each village, either a black or a white Lolo, but at present most pi-mu are white Lolo. Only a male can become a pi-mu. He goes through a tutorial system, the only kind of formal instruction among the Lolo which requires learning and training. Tutorial instruction is usually handed down from father to son or from uncle to nephew as a family occupation. The pi-mu keeps in the family scriptural books, including those on ancestral legends, fortune-telling, divination, invocation, exorcism, praying for rain, and others, all transmitted and copied in Lolo. [95] The Lolo written language is not commonly used, and its preservation and transmission are to be credited mainly to the pi-mu.

Besides the pi-mu, there is another kind of magician called su-nieh. The su-nieh has no tutor. He is just an ordinary person possessed by a su-nieh ghost that causes sickness or loss of mind, but later, after having sacrificed to it a white sheep and a white chicken in the woods and having recovered from sickness, he becomes a su-nieh. Both men and women can become su-nieh, but the art is not transmittible and also scriptures do not exist. Ordinarily, when a su-nieh performs magic to cure sickness, he beats a sheepskin drum, whirls and dances — his whole body shivering and his mouth muttering chants — moves around and imprecates to the utmost of his ability.

Although the pi-mu and the su-nieh belong to different systems, they have the common aim of practicing magic. The duty of a pi-mu is very complicated, while that of a su-nieh is comparatively simple. We shall describe separately their work and performances to make clear the position of magic among the Lolo.

First, let us discuss divination, a form of divine revelation that foretells good or bad fortune. There are two opposite kinds of divination. The first kind is prediction made by the god through human mouth, or the communication of divine will by the priest in forecasting future developments — a type of divination practiced universally in Siberia, Africa, and Polynesia. The other kind is practiced through the observation of physical objects or of animal entrails, bones, skeletons, and other things. In order to foretell the future, the magician has to have strict technical training to enable him to observe the important positions and spots of animal bones and entrails. It is to this kind that the entire system of Lolo divination belongs.

755 There are many kinds of sickness in Lolo families, but instead of using medicine, they effect cures through magic. First, the pi-mu will decide which evil spirit caused the sickness; then he will perform magic to cure it through exorcism. The way to cure a sick person is to send off the evil spirit, called "sending off the Buddha" by the Han-Chinese of the [753] border regions. According to Lolo tradition, all sicknesses and misfortunes are caused by evil spirits. Therefore, three 751 times each year, on the third, seventh, and tenth months of 789 the lunar calendar, they perform an exorcising ceremony for the purpose of driving away the ghosts to ensure peace and safety for the family.

● 756 While the author was staying at San-ho-i-ta in Ta-ling[1] Shan, he witnessed with his own eyes an exorcising cere- 789 mony at Li-ch'ü Ta-chi's household. The pi-mu, a villager, was a white Lolo called Shê-chia-erh. Followed by his disciple, who was none other than his twelve-or thirteen-year-old son, he performed with a bagful of magic tools. Both master 789 and disciple sat side by side behind the kitchen stove which was ordinarily the seat for honored guests. The father and son tied together a straw figure and cut some wood into tiny pieces that looked like coins. Then Shê-chia-erh rang a bell and began to recite the scripture, his disciple following him in the recitation. As they were chanting the scripture, they worked with their hands on the straw figure. The pi-mu then put a piece of stone inside the stove until it became red hot, after which he took it out of the stove, carried it with him to the master's bedroom, and walked around it once as if to chase away the ghosts. After this he came back and sat down again on the ground to recite more scripture, at the same time distributing the wooden pieces.

After the pi-mu had tied up four straw figures, Ta-chi, his wife nee En-cha, and their three children all squatted on the right side of the stove, the whole family making a circle. A white Lolo slave then grasped a cock with both hands and circled it above Ta-chi's head nine times before handing it to Shê-chia-erh. Then, with all his strength, the pi-mu struck the cock's neck with a sharp knife, all the time incessantly reciting the charms. After the cock had died, its blood was spread over the straw figures and the feathers were stuck on their bodies. The slave then led in a goat and held it seven times around Ta-chi's and the others' heads before killing it and sprinkling its blood over the straw figures. As the [801] Lolo consider an odd number to be lucky, there has to be seven or nine rounds. The death of the cock and goat has the

[1] [Errata, Should be "liang" — Analyst.]

other Orientals. 000

The so-called pi-mo (Bemo) among the Lolo probably correspond to the shih-kung /male instructors/ among the Chinese, and hold a very important position in Lolo society. The I have no formal religious beliefs, nor do they worship gods; they do not even have ancestral tablets at home. But like other primitive tribes, they have a strong superstitious belief in ghosts and spirits. They do not administer medicine to cure the sick, who are supposed to have been possessed by demons, but kill chickens (ta chi) or sheep (ta yang) as a form of prayer to the spirits. They kill a chicken to cure a light illness; for more serious illness, they kill a pig, a sheep or a cow in proportion to the severity of the case. At the same time a pi-mo is invited to pray and exorcise the ghosts through sacrifices. If there is no recovery after all these endeavors they consider the case as hopeless and accept death, in which case the pi-mo is invited again to pray and release the soul from sufferings in the next world. Their only scientific measure against contagious diseases is to isolate a victim and his dwelling from others so as to prevent the disease from spreading. For this reason a place may be shut off for several weeks. [756] 755

The pi-mo are the only ones among the I versed in the Lolo language. They belong to the Wa-tzu class but are respected by the Heh-I because of their special position as scholars and exorcisers of ghosts in the Lolo society. They can practice only after several years of of apprenticeship with a senior pi-mo. They are called upon to attend all important affairs as well as cases of sickness and funerals mentioned above. They also participate in weddings and New Year festivals. Their other responsibilities include fortune-telling and choosing propitious days for fighting blood-feuds among themselves or joining in battle against the Chinese. 756

The different I branches may be either "ch'in chia" /relatives/ or "yüan chia" /enemies/. The I of the same branch cannot intermarry for the same reason that among the Chinese there is "no marriage between those of the same family name." The prospective bride or groom is usually chosen from a neighboring I branch. With repeated marriages, family relationships may be either manifold or interlinked; e.g., the three chia of Wu-po, A-lu and Ma-shih in the Ta-Liang-shan region are all related to one another. The branches related through marriages are called "ch'in chia" and work closely together, /117/ giving mutual aid in times of trouble even at the risk of death. They are as close to one another as those of the same clan (those who belong to the same branch. 582 546